

Subject: Yakima materials
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Intro

Nitrate contamination in groundwater has been a documented problem in the Lower Yakima Valley for at least 25 years. It is estimated that 12- 15% of residential wells are above the MCL of 10ppm and roughly 30,000 people rely on residential wells. Because much of the impacted population is poor and minority, Region 10 designated the Lower Yakima Valley as our EJ Showcase community in 2009.

In 2008 a series of articles ran in the local paper which highlighted the problem and governments' lack of any real action to address it. EPA then joined with State agencies and the County government to produce a report that summarized available information, outlined the complex local, state and federal responsibilities and provided some recommendations for future actions. Shortly after this, EPA initiated a sampling effort attempting to link specific potential sources of pollution with polluted wells.

Interaction with the Dairy Fed/State Legislation

EPA provided copies of the report to the 5 dairies that were analyzed as part of the report 3 weeks before the report was released to the public in September 2012. We did this in order to determine their interest in working on a consent order to resolve sources of nitrate contamination. The report was shared with the Dairy Federation by the 5 dairies.

Initially the 5 dairies and the Dairy Federation expressed their willingness to work collaboratively with EPA to address the problems. The press release for the report included a very positive statement from the Executive Director of the Dairy Federation. There was also a parallel discussion with state agencies and the Governor's office regarding programmatic improvements to the state's Dairy Waste Management Program.

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(discuss 5 dairies posture here)

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